

17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828

401-949-1480

MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2010

9:30 AM

USDA/NRCS Conference Room

Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 9:34.

Present: Eric Offenberg, Chair; Ken Ayars, DEM; Emerson Wildes, ERICD; Paul Dolan, Gina DeMarco, NRICD; Harriet Powell, Clarkson Collins, SRICD; Walter Marshall, NRCS; Karen Hess, RI Planning; Kristen Castrataro, URI Coop Extension; Ramona LeBlanc SCC.

I. Minutes

A motion was made to accept the April 28 minutes: Paul/Ken: unanimous.

II. Financial Reports

A motion was made to acknowledge receipt of the financial reports: Paul/Harriet: no discussion.

III. Old Business

A. FFOS

- 1. Appointments:** New appointments to the subcommittee are still pending Senate approval. The assessors have all been reappointed though.
- 2. Training for Tax Assessors:** With funding from a combination of sources (a SARE Professional Training grant and a private funder) FFOS training will be planned for September.
- 3. Farm Application Process/DEM Publications:** Updates relating to FFOS on DEM's website will be made within a week. The Citizens' Guide will also be update to reflect new application process. DEM and URI will print documents.

B. Ag Tech Interview: Based upon the recommendation of the interview committee, the SCC decided to offer Jessica Blackledge a position creating conservation plans for farm applicants to FFOS.

C. Reorganization Update: While most of the organizational goals have been achieved (centralized record keeping, phone system, implementation of standardized practices) there are elements of the adopted policy that have not yet been addressed. Network-wide distribution of information will be achieved by placing minutes of CD's and SCC meetings on existing RIACD website. Formal, signed agreements between CD's and SCC will be developed when the

reorganization policy has evolved more fully. Options for distribution of overhead/administrative funds on new contracts in core programs will be developed and presented before August 1.

D. Open Seats on SCC: Names previously discussed will be submitted to current Governor with resumes.

E. Status of Grants:

Innovative Solutions funding has been allocated for the current fiscal year. SCC will re-submit in September.

RI Foundation grant proposal is being modified to put an emphasis on strategic planning. Ramona will investigate fees to develop plans for each CD. Also, some funding for establishment of satellite locations and publicity will be included.

F. Energy Audits: Eight training positions are available. Doug and Liz will be able to participate and the two ag tech's names/resumes will be submitted to RC & D for consideration. The opportunity for more work for the CD's in application assistance was discussed.

G. SE & SC Handbook: RC & D is working to develop an agreement with NRCS to fund completion of the update of the handbook. Completion of the revision is crucial as the handbook is a companion to the DEM Stormwater Manual that is also being revised this year as well as to LID guidance on stormwater.

IV. New Business

A. Proposed Budget 2010-2011: The first full-year budget for the SCC since reorganization was presented. It will require a \$900 per month contribution from each District. New contracts in core programs will help defray administrative costs.

B. WHIP: SCC has an agreement with RC & D to publicize and conduct three workshops about the WHIP Forestry Initiative. The workshops have been completed and were well attended. 28 applications have been received to date.

V. Reports

A. Chair: Eric is in receipt of a letter from ERICD regarding a concern that events held within each District should emphasize the role and presence of that local Board/District. The SCC recognized the need for coordination between Districts and that a local Director or the local Board itself should act as host to any events held within the District. If work is being done within a District as part of a core program or by ag techs, full knowledge and promotion of the District will be required. Pamphlets/brochures, etc. should be available for any contact within that District. Further, local districts should be notified of any contacts in core programs within their area. However, it was noted that core programs will be under the control of the SCC and will be implemented by staff not Directors, to ensure the

consistent implementation of programs that was one of the goals of the reorganization.

Eric turned the meeting over to Vice-Chair, Paul Dolan.

B. Districts/Advisors

1. SRICD: Doug has participated in Ag Inventory and WHIP workshops. Contract for work at Canochet Farm was rejected by Narragansett Town Council. Doug will be conducting GPS training for Maine Rural Water Association. Dry Weather sampling in Narragansett has been completed. SRICD is working with RIACD to develop contracts with NOAA and NRCS to repair a fish passage at the Village at Indian Lake.

2. ERICD: Meetings continue but agricultural endeavors limit Directors' available time.

3. NRICD: PWSB: Scituate High School rededicated their tree farm after students developed a forest management plan. Students also participated in Project WET. Five elementary Schools participated in the Water Festival which was attended by Lt Gov Roberts and Pam Marchand, CEO and Chief Engineer of Providence Water. The Ag Inventory is in the finals stages of this round. The WHIP workshop was very well attended.

4. URI: Working with RIACD to develop an RDC Business

Opportunity grant which is basically a needs assessment for farm equipment and a feasibility study for an equipment bank in RI, Southeastern MA and Eastern CT.

5. DEM: Ken would like to involve the CD's in matching available state land with farmers in need of more land. He also suggested a possible role for the CD's in the development of water management plans which are required for farmers to get exemptions from water restrictions. Gina suggested that the benefit of irrigation plans could be included in packets to be distributed to crop producers and greenhouses in the next round of the Ag Inventory.

6. RC & D: Written report distributed.

7. State Planning: Challenge grants are in place with West Greenwich and Exeter. Both involve TDR program. Also working with DEM on forestry resource assessment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.